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## Viewing cable 08BOGOTA3079, NO PROGRESS IN GOC PEACE OVERTURES TO FARC AND ELN

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08BOGOTA3079**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">08BOGOTA3079</a>	<a href="#">2008-08-20 18:51</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Bogota</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.semana.com/wikileaks/Seccion/168.aspx>

VZCZCXYZ0008  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #3079/01 2331851  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 201851Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4262  
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 8333  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0909  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 6476  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 2193  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 7162  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

id: 166755  
date: 8/20/2008 18:51  
refid: 08BOGOTA3079  
origin: Embassy Bogota  
classification: SECRET  
destination: 08BOGOTA3015  
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VZCZCXYZ0008  
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RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 2193  
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----- header ends -----

S E C R E T BOGOTA 003079

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: NO PROGRESS IN GOC PEACE OVERTURES TO FARC AND ELN

REF: BOGOTA 3015

Classified By: Political Counselor John Creamer  
Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

#### SUMMARY

1. (C) Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo told us the GOC continues efforts to contact FARC leader Alfonso Cano to start peace talks, but has made no progress. Restrepo's contact with the group communicated with lower-level FARC, but has not obtained a meeting with the FARC leader. Restrepo reiterated that the GOC feels no pressure to begin talks, and will continue efforts to promote the mass demobilization of individual FARC fronts. Father Dario Echeverri said the Church continues its outreach to Cano, but has not made contact. Restrepo and Echeverri told us separately that prospects for renewed talks with the ELN are slim due to the group's internal divisions and the negative influence of President Chavez. Meanwhile, a 50 member ELN splinter group demobilized in Choco department. End Summary.

#### PEACE COMMISSIONER: NO CONTACT WITH FARC LEADERS

2. (C) Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo told us the GOC has made no progress in making direct contact with FARC leader Alfonso Cano. Restrepo's "contact" exchanged messages with lower-level FARC who claim Pablo Catatumbo and Cano are interested in meeting, but added that "the security conditions" were inadequate. If the contact obtains a meeting with Cano, his message will simply be that the GOC (Restrepo) remains ready to meet with the FARC to discuss a peace process.

3. (S) Restrepo said the GOC sees no signs that Cano is ready to talk peace. The Cubans claim Cano wants to negotiate, but that FARC military leader Mono Jojoy remains opposed. In intercepted internal FARC communications Cano consistently takes a hard line against the GOC and peace talks. Leftist Polo Democratico Senator Gustavo Petro told us separately there is no chance of a peace process with the FARC, since the group is betting on outlasting President Alvaro Uribe and dealing with a new government. Vice Minister of Defense Sergio Jaramillo also voiced skepticism about a FARC process, noting that in intercepted internal FARC communications, FARC officials said Venezuelan Interior

Minister Ramon Rodriguez Chacin told them President Hugo Chavez' statement that the FARC should lay down its arms was tactical and did not signify a shift in GOV policy. With continued Venezuelan support, the FARC would feel even less pressure talk.

¶4. (C) Restrepo said the GOC feels no pressure to start talks, noting that it would be difficult to envision a focus for the discussions. The GOC does not want to negotiate political reforms with the group, but might consider a political/economic reform package parallel to a peace process. Transitional justice issues would be extremely contentious, since most FARC leaders face serious human rights charges.

#### CATHOLIC CHURCH CONTINUES OUTREACH EFFORTS

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¶5. (C) Restrepo said the GOC authorized the Catholic Church to continue its outreach to the FARC, but has heard nothing from Father Dario Echeverri. Echeverri told us separately that Restrepo's contact with the FARC is Henry Acosta, a left-wing politician from Valle de Cauca department. He recently met with Acosta, who showed him a draft negotiations proposal prepared in November, 2007 by FARC commander Pablo Catatumbo. Acosta said he had presented the proposal to Uribe, but received no response. Echeverri said the contents of the proposal--including a constituent assembly-- appeared reasonable and could serve as the basis for discussions. Still, he conceded the FARC is much weaker today than ten months ago. Echeverri added that the Church continues its own outreach to Cano, and believes these efforts have greater prospects for success than the Acosta channel.

#### GOC LOOKS FOR LARGE-SCALE FARC DEMOBILIZATIONS

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¶6. (C) With global peace talks with the FARC over the next two years highly unlikely due to the group's lack of political vision, Restrepo said the GOC will continue to promote the mass demobilizations of individual fronts. FARC commander Fabian Ramirez broke contact with the GOC after Operation Jaque, but Restrepo said he has received an overture from the FARC western block operating in Choco, Risaralda, and western Antioquia departments. The message was confusing, but Restrepo said the GOC will pursue the opening. He added that the GOC was coordinating military, intelligence and negotiating efforts on the 9th FARC front--among others--to persuade them to demobilize en masse. Vice Minister Jaramillo confirmed the GOC is targeting individual fronts to persuade them to demobilize.

#### WORRY OVER FARC ATTACKS

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¶7. (C) Military Operations Chief (J3) General Carlos Saavedra told us FARC capabilities remain limited around Bogota and other major urban areas. Still, the August 14 bombing near Medellin that killed 7 and wounded more than 50 (reportedly carried out by FARC 18th Front), plus a series of small attacks near Bogota, has raised fears the groups could be planning an offensive--likely using terrorist tactics rather than conventional attacks against military targets. (See Reftel on EAC results.)

#### ELN PROCESS GOING NOWHERE

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¶8. (C) Restrepo told us the ELN appears committed to continuing the armed struggle, and dismissed prospects for renewed talks. ELN Central Committee (COCE) member Pablo Beltran is trying to go to Havana to revive the Havana-Caracas air bridge for ELN leaders. Petro said Uribe should be more interested in an ELN process, but conceded that restarting talks would be difficult due to internal ELN divisions, a lack of realism within the group, and the negative influence of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. Echeverri agreed the ELN remains intransigent, adding that the group's Eastern Block (Arauca, Boyaca, Casanare) has effectively declared its independence from the COCE.

¶9. (U) The ELN issued a communique August 11 stating "it

would be very difficult to move forward a peace process" with the GOC. Meanwhile, 45 members of an ELN spin-off group, the "Revolutionary Guevara Army (ERG)," demobilized en masse in Choco due to increased military pressure. The ERG turned over 31 rifles and other arms. Restrepo said the group, which split from the ELN in 1990s and carried out kidnappings and other crimes in Choco, would be eligible for Justice and Peace Law benefits.

BROWNFIELD

=====CABLE ENDS=====